
Wisconsin Legislative Council

ACT MEMO



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2021 Wisconsin Act 148
[2021 Senate Bill 418]

**Wisconsin Child Abuse and
Neglect Reports**

BACKGROUND

Current law requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to prepare and submit to the Governor and Legislature an annual report, currently titled the Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Report (**CAN Report**),¹ that includes the following information:

- The status of child abuse and neglect programs and unborn child abuse programs.
- The number of adoptions under the special needs adoption program granted in the preceding calendar year and the costs to the state for services relating to those adoptions.
- The number of children during the preceding calendar year who entered out-of-home care under the placement and care responsibility of a county department or DCF under the Children's Code or the Juvenile Justice Code after finalization of an adoption or guardianship.

Current law also requires DCF to prepare a **summary report** on certain information related to child abuse or neglect incidents of death, serious injury, or egregious abuse or neglect (critical incidents). Among other requirements, DCF must send each summary report to the appropriate legislative standing committees. Those committees must review the summary reports, conduct public hearings on the reports at least annually, and submit recommendations to DCF regarding the reports.

2021 WISCONSIN ACT 148

2021 Wisconsin Act 148 requires the **CAN Report** to include certain information about DCF's **summary reports** on critical incidents. Specifically, in addition to the information required to be included under current law, listed above, the act requires that the CAN Report include all of the following information about summary reports on critical incidents:

- Aggregated information from DCF's summary reports.
- Trends identified by DCF in the summary reports.
- Trends identified by DCF based on its in-depth practice reviews of certain critical incidents.
- Changes in policies or practices that have been made to address any issues raised in DCF's review of critical incidents in the summary reports.

The act also requires the appropriate legislative standing committees to conduct a hearing at least annually on the **CAN Report**.

Effective date: January 1, 2023

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¹ Current and prior CAN Reports are available on DCF's website at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/reports>.